

OrdnanceReports

News updates from around the world



April 4, 2003



This publication is produced by the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Communications Coordinator. The purpose of this publication is to provide Command Information materiel concerning world events and the U.S. military's role in those events. Ordnance specific events will be covered if appropriate. Direct your correspondence to Ed Starnes at 410-278-2415 (DSN 298-2415), or email edward.starnes@ocs.apg.army.mil.

Iraqi family risks it all to save American POW

by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Joseph R. Chenelly

MARINE COMBAT HEADQUARTERS, Iraq, April 3, 2003 — New heroes have surfaced in the rescue of U.S. Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch.

Under the watchful eyes of more than 40 murderous gunmen, the 19-year-old supply clerk laid in Saddam Hussein Hospital suffering from at least one gunshot wound and several broken bones.

As her captors discussed amputating her leg, an Iraqi man leaned to her ear and whispered, "Don't worry." Lynch replied with a warm smile.

The man was already working with U.S. Marines to gain the critical information needed to rescue one of the first American prisoners of war in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Just a day earlier, the lawyer from An Nasiriyah had walked 10 kilometers to inform American forces he knew where Lynch was being held.

The shocked Marines asked Mohammad to return to the hospital and note certain things. He was tasked with counting the guards and documenting the hospital's layout. Knowing the risk, he agreed to help the young woman he had seen only once.

"I came to the hospital to visit my wife," said the Iraqi man, whose wife is a nurse. "I could see much more security than normal."

The man, who, for his protection, will only be identified as Mohammad, asked one of the doctors about the increased security. "He told me there was a woman American soldier there."

Together, the two went to see her. Peering through the room's window, Mohammad saw a sight he claims will stay with him for a life. An Iraqi colonel slapped the soldier who had been captured after a fierce firefight, March 23. First with his palm, then with his backhand.

"My heart stopped," he said in a soft tone. "I knew then I must help



The Iraqi family that provided vital information in the rescue of POW Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch, rest at Camp Liberty, Iraq, April 3. The family was welcomed by Marines, who greeted them with food, clothing and an American flag. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. L.A. Salinas

her be saved. I decided I must go to tell the Americans."

Just days earlier, Mohammad saw a woman's body dragged through his neighborhood. He said "the animals" were punishing the woman for waving at a coalition helicopter. The brutal demonstration failed to deter him from going to the Marines.

The same day he first saw Lynch, he located a Marine checkpoint. Worried he'd be mistaken for an attacker in civilian clothes, he approached the Marines with his hands high above his head.

"[A Marine sentry] asked, 'What you want?'" Mohammad said. "I want to help you. I want to tell you important information - about Jessica!"

After talking with the Marines, he returned to the hospital to gather

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Renamed airport gateway to Iraq's future

by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 4, 2003 – Saddam International Airport is under new management and has been renamed Baghdad International Airport, U.S. Central Command officials said today.

Army Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, during a news conference in Qatar, said Army 5th Corps forces took the airport after heavy fighting. He said the airport will now be the “gateway to the future of Iraq.”

Brooks, the CENTCOM deputy operations chief, also reported on coalition casualties following a suicide bombing at Hadithah Dam area in western Iraq. He said initial reports are that the explosion occurred as a vehicle approached the checkpoint.

“A woman who appeared to be pregnant exited the vehicle, screaming for assistance and in some degree of distress,” he said. “As coalition forces began to approach, she and the vehicle were detonated. She was killed by the explosion of the vehicle, and we do have some combat losses as a result of this. We will provide more information as time goes on.”

American special operations forces have been in control of the dam since April 2.

Brooks said coalition forces found a chemical warfare training facility outside Baghdad. They also found a warehouse with containers filled with a suspicious substance. He said experts have taken samples and are testing them.

Coalition air forces continued to hit regime command and control targets, surface-to-surface missile sites, air defenses and any identified military aircraft, he said.

One target was the Iraqi air force headquarters. The buildings are located west of the Tigris River, near the Baghdad/Muthenna airfield. Officials said the strike degraded Iraqi air force capabilities to command and control their air assets. Battle damage assessment is ongoing.

All told, coalition air forces flew more than 1,900 sorties in support of operations April 3. A total of 850 were strike sorties, and 85 percent of those were aimed at Iraqi Republican Guard units.

Defense officials said there were about 450 tanker missions, more than 200 airlift missions and about 100 command and control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force continued its attack toward Baghdad, destroying remnants of the Baghdad Republican Guard division near Al Kut. News reports indicate that 2,500 Republican



Soldiers, seen in this image from video, take cover Friday, April 4, 2003, as they approach Saddam International Airport after an all-night tank and infantry assault. After securing the airport they promptly renamed it and then began searching the tunnels underneath for any Iraqi soldiers who might be hiding out. (AP Photo/APTN)

Guardsmen surrendered to the Marines. Brooks could not confirm that number, but said that portions of units – not whole units – are surrendering to coalition forces.

Brooks said coalition forces have fought elements of a number of Republican Guard units in the last 24 hours. “At this point it is very difficult to separate one from another,” he said.

“We have had a tremendous effect on the organizations we’ve encountered in the process. We still anticipate that Special Republican Guard forces are operating from within Baghdad or on the outskirts. Some of those we may have encountered near the airport today, with some very uncoordinated small-unit attacks.”

The attacks came after coalition forces had taken the airport, “and they were soundly defeated,” he said.

Coalition special operations forces in northern Iraq continued concentrated air strikes against regime military forces. “They are maintaining effective control of roads leading into and out of Iraq and between Baghdad and Tikrit,” Brooks said. “Special operations forces in key locations throughout the country are positioned to locate regime forces or strategic systems and direct precision fire to destroy them.”

The integration of the combat power of all aspects of the coalition “is proving to be devastating to Iraqi forces,” Brooks said. That integration is a key component of the plan by Army Gen. Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander, he noted. “It’s working and we remain on plan to accomplish our objectives.”

U.S. troops find vials of white powder

by Kimberly Hefling

NEAR BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - U.S. troops found thousands of boxes of suspicious white powder, nerve agent antidote and Arabic documents on how to engage in chemical warfare south of Baghdad. But a senior U.S. official familiar with initial testing said the materials were believed to be explosives.

Col. John Peabody, engineer brigade commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, said the materials were found Friday at the Latifiyah industrial complex 25 miles south of Baghdad.

"It is clearly a suspicious site," Peabody said.

But the senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the material was under further study. The site is enormous and U.S. troops are still investigating it for potential weapons of mass destruction, the official said.

"Initial reports are that the material is probably just explosives, but we're still going through the place," the official said.

Peabody said troops found thousands of 2-inch by 5-inch boxes, each containing three vials of white powder, together with documents written in Arabic that dealt with how to engage in chemical warfare.

He also said they discovered atropine, used to counter the effects of nerve agents, and 2-Pam chloride, which is used in combination with atropine in case of chemical attack.

The facility had been identified by the International Atomic Energy Agency as a suspected chemical, biological and nuclear weapons site. U.N. inspectors visited the plant at least a dozen times, including as recently as Feb. 18.

The facility is part of a larger complex known as the Latifiyah Explosives and Ammunition Plant al Qa Qaa.

During the 1991 Gulf War, U.S. jets bombed the plant.

Troops also discovered what they believe is a training center for nuclear, chemical and biological warfare in Iraq's western desert, Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said Friday.

One bottle found at the site was labeled "tabun" - a nerve agent that the U.S. government says may have been used during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The soldiers found only a small amount of the chemical, indicating the site was meant for training, not storing or deploying chemical weapons, Brooks said.

"In that particular site, we believe that was the only sample," Brooks said. "That's why we believe it was a training site. Our conclusion is that this was not a (weapons of mass destruction) site ... it proved to be far less than that."

Photos of the site showed shelves of brown bottles with yellow labels. Brooks said troops did not understand some of the labels and were collecting the bottles for examination by experts.



Bottles sit on shelves in what military officials believe is a training center for nuclear, chemical and biological warfare in Iraq's western desert, in this undated U.S. Central Command handout photo. One bottle found at the site was labeled "tabun," a nerve agent that the U.S. government says may have been used during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The American soldiers found only a small amount of the chemical, indicating the site was meant for training, not storing or deploying chemical weapons, said Brigadier General Vince Brooks at the Central Command Center, in Doha, Qatar, Friday, April 4, 2003. (AP Photo/U.S. Central Command)

On April 1, Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan, in a statement on Iraqi television, repeated Baghdad's position that it had no weapons of mass destruction. Referring to reports that gas masks and other chemical gear had been found elsewhere in the country, he said the coalition might plant weapons of mass destruction to implicate Iraq.

"Let me say one more time that Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

"The aggressors may themselves intend to bring those materials to plant them here and say those are weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Iraq says it will not use weapons of mass destruction

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf said on Friday Iraq had no plans to use chemical or biological weapons against invading U.S. and British forces despite a threat to use "non-conventional" methods.

Asked if Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction, Sahaf told a news conference: "No, not at all. But we will conduct a kind of martyrdom operations."

Iraq denies U.S. and British accusations that it possesses weapons of mass destruction. But earlier in the news conference Sahaf said Iraq would "commit a non-conventional act," possibly on Friday night, against U.S. forces who have seized Baghdad Airport.

Eight suspected Taliban killed in Afghanistan

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) - Afghan militia soldiers and blistering airstrikes by U.S.-led coalition planes have killed eight suspected Taliban fighters in the southern mountains, an Army spokesman said Friday. Another 15 suspects were taken into custody

The deaths and captures came during a 14-hour bombing campaign Wednesday and Thursday in the Tor Ghar mountains near the town of Spinboldak, where Afghan soldiers and U.S. special forces discovered a group of about 40 suspected Taliban at a transit camp.

One Afghan militia member was killed and three others were injured in the firefight, Col. Roger King said. There were no U.S. casualties.

"Eight enemy were killed in action, and Afghan forces have taken 15 persons under control," he told reporters at Bagram Air Base, headquarters for a multinational coalition fighting terror in Afghanistan. "As far as we know they were Taliban."

In the cleanup Thursday, the soldiers also found and confiscated light machine guns, bomb-making materials, improvised explosive devices, two trucks, two motorcycles and ammunition, King said.

He said more than 35,000 pounds of ordnance were dropped or fired from five types of aircraft - Harrier jets, B-1 bombers, A-10 Thunderbolts and helicopter gunships - on the rebel positions.

The U.S. special forces soldiers and some 250 Afghan soldiers drove the Taliban suspects into the mountains about 25 miles north of Spinboldak, a gateway to southeastern Afghanistan.

It was the largest group of suspected Taliban that coalition forces



An Afghan boy carries firewood as a U.S. Army humvee convoy passes through rural roads on its way to a Civil-Affairs mission in village Chaykal, about 5 kilometers, or 3 miles, due north of the army base in Bagram, Afghanistan, Thursday April 3, 2003. The purpose of the visit was to 'Adopt-a-Village', under which the needs of the village are identified and efforts made to assist them, above and beyond distributing humanitarian aid and toys for children. (AP Photo/Gurinder Osan)

have found in several months.

Taliban and al-Qaida holdouts, along with allied rebels groups, are believed to have carried out frequent attacks against Afghan government forces and their supporters since the U.S.-led invasion in late 2001.

Separately, the coalition's humanitarian projects board on Thursday approved 19 assistance and reconstruction projects valued at \$722,000, King said. The projects include water improvement and the construction of medical clinics and schools in 10 provinces.

2 U.S. soldiers die armored vehicle collision in South Korea training

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) - Two U.S. soldiers died and seven others were injured when two armored vehicles collided during a military exercise in South Korea, the U.S. military said Friday.

Sgt. 1st Class Lionel Richards, 43, and Sgt. Gilberto Strickland, 30, were killed in the accident Wednesday, the U.S. Army's 2nd Infantry Division said in a news release.

The release did not state their home towns.

The accident occurred at the Korea Training Center in Pocheon, near the tense border between South Korea and North Korea.

The injured are Spc. Luiz Marquez, Spc. Floyd Jordan, Pvt. Luis Grecham, Pvt. William Short, Spc. John Monet, Sgt. William Equipciano and Pvt. Gilberto Foster, the release said.

Equipciano and Foster were released after treatment, while the rest

remained in the hospital.

"All hospitalized soldiers are listed in stable condition," the release said.

The United States keeps 37,000 troops in South Korea.

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Saddam urges Iraqis to strike coalition

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - In an unannounced television broadcast Friday designed to rally his people, President Saddam Hussein called on Iraqis to strike at the U.S.-led coalition. The speech made only one topical reference - to the capture of an Apache helicopter March 23, which Iraqi officials have said was brought down by farmers in central Iraq.

References to the helicopter suggest Saddam's speech was made after the strike aimed at killing him, a U.S. intelligence official said. "Perhaps you remember the valiant Iraqi peasant and how he shot down an American Apache with an old weapon," Saddam said in the brief speech.

U.S. and British have expressed doubt about whether the Iraqi leader was alive since the opening day of the war, when cruise missiles hit a compound in Baghdad where Saddam was believed to be hiding.

Military leaders have increasingly raised questions about Saddam's well-being this week, trying to push him into showing himself, Pentagon officials said.

Saddam's reference to the Apache attack suggests his message, if taped, was made after the strike aimed at killing him on the opening

day of war, a U.S. intelligence official said Friday. The message was some of the strongest evidence yet that Saddam survived the March 20 attack.

The official stopped short of saying the video message, which was broadcast on Iraqi television, provided conclusive proof he was still alive and in command.

Saddam also said the U.S.-led forces had "bypassed your (Iraqi) armed defenses" in the battlefield and urged his followers to "strike them forcefully, strike them."

The grim-faced Saddam appeared in a military uniform and beret, with an Iraqi flag over his right shoulder. He paused occasionally to turn the pages of a notebook as he spoke.

Saddam began by saying coalition forces had failed to shake the steadfastness of the Iraqi people. He called on Baghdad's people to resist and to stick to "your principles, your patriotism and the honor of men and women."

Full text of speech on page 8

Iraqi family risks it all to save American POW continued

information.

"I went to see the security," he said. "I watched where they stood, where they sat, where they ate and when they slept."

While he observed Saddam's henchmen, the notorious regime death squad paid Mohammad's home an unexpected visit. His wife and 6-year-old daughter fled to nearby family. Many of his personal belongings, including his car, were seized.

"I am not worried for myself," he said. "Security in Iraq [that is still] loyal to Saddam will kill my wife. They will kill my [child]."

Meanwhile, Mohammad accompanied his friend into Lynch's tightly guarded room. She was covered up to her chin by a white blanket. Her head was bandaged. A wound on the right leg was in bad condition.

"The doctors wanted to cut her leg off," he said "My friend and I decided we would stop it."

Creating numerous diversions, they managed to delay the surgery long enough. "She would have died if they tried it."

Mohammad walked through battles in the city streets for two straight days to get to back to the hospital. His main mission was to watch the guards, but each morning he attempted to keep Lynch's spirits strong with a "good morning" in English.

He said she was brave throughout the ordeal.

When reporting back to the Marines on March 30, he brought five

different maps he and his wife had made. He was able to point to the exact room the captured soldier was being held in. He also handed over the security layout, reaction plan and times that shift changes occurred.

He had counted 41 bad guys, and determined a helicopter could land on the hospital's roof. It was just the information the Marines needed.

American forces conducted a nighttime raid April 1. Lynch was safely rescued. She has since been transported to a medical facility in Germany.

Mohammad and his family are now in a secure location and have been granted refugee status. He doesn't feel safe in An Nasryah, but he hopes things will improve as the war against the regime advances.

"Iraq is not a safe place while Saddam Hussein is in power," Mohammad said. "He kills the Iraqi people whenever he wants. I believe the Americans will bring peace and security to the people of Iraq."

Mohammad's wife said she wants to volunteer to help injured or sick American forces in the future.

"America came here to help us," he said. "The Marines are brave men. They have been gentle with the Iraqi people. They are taking out Saddam Hussein. For that, we're grateful."

Mohammad's family hopes to meet Lynch in the future.

by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 3, 2003 – Precision munitions and careful targeting have enabled Operation Iraqi Freedom planners to maximize the effects of missiles and bombs and minimize unintended Iraqi civilian casualties and collateral damage.

“I believe that we have proven, to date, that we have waged a very precise — and very focused — targeting process against the regime,” Army Maj. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal told reporters today during a press briefing held at the State Department’s Foreign Press Center here.

“In fact, it has been probably unprecedented in history ... our willingness to only target certain regime-oriented elements” for attack, McChrystal, the Joint Staff’s vice director for operations, pointed out.

The target of ongoing U.S.-coalition military operations in Iraq “is the regime of Saddam Hussein – it’s not the Iraqi people,” the two-star general emphasized.

Consequently, he continued, it’s important that targets of U.S. and coalition missiles and bombs in Iraq contribute to the liberation of the Iraqi people through the removal of Hussein’s government.

And the capabilities of today’s laser- and global- positioning-system-guided munitions, McChrystal explained, have provided the U.S. military with previously unheard of levels of striking precision.

“We have the ability to hit, in most cases, exactly what we try to hit – and scale the munition appropriately to the task,” the general declared.

McChrystal noted it’s morally imperative that such a precise and lethal military capability be used with great care.

“Because we can be more discriminating in the use of force, it gives us a responsibility to be more discriminating” in the selection of targets, McChrystal emphasized.

“International law draws a clear distinction between combatants and civilians in any war,” he remarked. He pointed out the principle that civilians are to be protected during military operations “lies at the heart of the International Law of Armed Conflict.”

This line of separation between combatants and civilians, McChrystal said, is well-understood and adhered to among the U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.

However, he continued, the requirement to protect civilians on the battlefield is evidently not judged as important by members of Hussein’s regime, who routinely employ human shields to ward off attacks on legitimate military targets.

Precision munitions provide ‘great capability,’ carry ‘great responsibility’

Operation Iraqi Freedom military planners use a vetting process in selecting targets. That reduces the likelihood of killing innocent civilians, McChrystal pointed out, and takes great care to identify mosques, schools, hospitals, embassies, and other structures that shouldn’t be attacked.

He noted another method planners use to limit civilian casualties and unintended collateral damage involves the selection of munitions to be used against a particular target.

For example, in taking out a structure with minimal damage to civilians and other buildings, a Hellfire missile could be used in lieu of a 2,000-pound bomb because the bomb has much more destructive power, the general noted.

Adjusting ordnance fuse times can be also be employed in this regard, he remarked. McChrystal noted that a delayed fuse could be used to allow a bomb to burrow itself into a building before exploding, thus avoiding a potential civilian-killing airburst.

Much thought is also put into planning how to deal with Iraqi dual-use facilities, he said. Such a facility could have a civilian use, and consequently, “might be something we don’t want to target, but ... at the same time has a military use,” such as communications facilities, he explained.

To minimize civilian casualties in such circumstances, McChrystal noted that military planners might bomb out a road leading to the facility, thereby preventing workers from entering. Or information operations may be employed to warn civilians not to go to the facility.

The general stated that even the timing of attacks can reduce the likelihood of civilian casualties, such as a night bombing run when civilians are at home and not at a targeted facility.

Modern military “technology has given us a great capability and a great responsibility,” McChrystal reiterated.

“But it has not made us perfect,” he acknowledged, noting that unintended casualties and collateral damage have occurred in Iraq.

“We’ve seen it already,” the general declared. “There will be unintended casualties and that will happen when technological systems malfunction — weapons break.

“It’s going to happen when human beings make mistakes – simple human error,” he continued, “and that will happen in every war – and on a daily basis.”

Nonetheless, U.S. and coalition military planners continue to do their utmost to limit the likelihood of civilian casualties in Operation Iraqi Freedom, McChrystal concluded. Their intent is to help the people of Iraq and to protect them from Saddam Hussein’s regime, as opposed to hurting them in the process.

4th Infantry Division lands in Kuwait

by David Josar, Stars and Stripes

SHUAIBA PORT, Kuwait – After two months of waiting, soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division have finally gotten on the ground in Kuwait and are closing in on the combat that has raged in Iraq for two weeks.

On Thursday, members of the unit helped unload the Cape Victory, a U.S. Navy ship with a cargo of high-tech tanks, attack and surveillance helicopters, armored personnel carriers and other vehicles and trailers.

The Cape Victory was the sixth ship to be unloaded over the past several days, and an additional 20 ships are still out at sea waiting to unload the rest of the 4th ID's equipment.

The boats had been floating off the Turkish coast for weeks, as military officials waited for approval that never came for coalition forces to use Turkey as a staging area against Iraq.

When Turkey's parliament voted not to allow U.S. troops to use their country, the ships turned toward Kuwait.

"This was part of the plan all along," said Army Maj. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, commander of the 4th ID. Odierno will now be commander of Task Force Iron Horse, made up of about 30,000 troops.

Dozens of 4th ID soldiers rushed to get the vehicles off the boats and make sure the equipment was ready for combat.

Near the port behind a dirt berm surrounded with a fence topped with razor wire, many of the vehicles had been checked out and were prepared for war.

There were more than a dozen columns of trucks, Humvees and other vehicles, and each of the columns was literally a mile long.

"They've been sitting around quite some time on the boat. We have to get them ready to go again," said Sgt. Wayne Sipe, a medic who was helping direct the flow of forklifts and armored vehicles rapidly coming off the Cape Victory. He said it takes between 12 and 18 hours to unload one ship.

The helicopters were shrink-wrapped in plastic for the journey. After they were towed off the ship, their propellers were reassembled and flown away.

As the equipment waited on ships, most of the 4th ID soldiers were at home at Fort Hood, Texas.

"The wait was hard," said Sipe.

About eight weeks ago, he moved his wife and children off base and back with relatives. But as he waited alone in the barracks for the order to deploy, he regretted that decision.

Most of the soldiers did not travel with the equipment and only



The 4th Infantry Division on Thursday continued to unload one of the 30-odd ships that have been carrying its equipment of tanks, armored vehicles and helicopters at Shuaiba Port, Kuwait.

began flying to Kuwait during the past week to link up with the vehicles.

Odierno said the timeline is fuzzy for when all the equipment will be unloaded and ready to go. He estimated between one and two weeks to complete this part of the mission.

Army Maj. Kevin MacWatters, the officer in charge of unloading the ships, said the 4th ID is considered the most technologically advanced division in the Army. Every tank and Bradley fighting vehicle is computer-linked to the command center and each other.

"It's like having the Internet in the desert," MacWatters said.

Despite waiting weeks to find out where they would deploy and missing the opening salvos of the fight in Iraq, officers and soldiers said morale of the 4th ID is undeterred.

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Marines say 2,500 Iraqi Republican Guards surrender

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar (AP) - U.S. Marines have reported that about 2,500 Iraqi Republican Guards surrendered between Kut and Baghdad, U.S. Central Command said Friday.

The surrender apparently occurred after clashes of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and the Republican Guard's Baghdad Division, said Navy Capt. Frank Thorp, spokesman at U.S. Central Command.

He stressed that Central Command had only received the report from the Marines on the ground and couldn't confirm it outright.

"We have reports of approximately 2,500 soldiers of the Iraqi Republican Guard laying down their arms in their confrontation with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force," he said, citing reports from the Marines.

He said those who showed a propensity to fight would become prisoners of war, while others who have shown they do not want to

fight will be allowed to return home.

U.S. Central Command has said it has more than 4,500 POWs in custody.

Thorp said the reports indicated that there were uniforms, boots and helmets on the streets and that the surrender showed the division was "demonstrating an unwillingness to fight against the American forces."

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, deputy operations director, announced Wednesday that the Baghdad Division had been "destroyed" in its confrontation with the Marines near Kut and was no longer a viable fighting force.

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Text of Saddam Hussein's televised speech Friday

DOHA, Qatar (AP) - Following is the text of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's speech Friday aired on Iraqi satellite channel translated from Arabic by The Associated Press:

"In the name of God, The Merciful, The Compassionate. And fight them on until there is no more tumult.

Oh great people, Oh men of our valiant armed forces, Oh Iraqi young men, Oh mujahedin, who carry the honor and trust of the weapons of jihad. Oh glorious women in your beloved, dear Baghdad, which is glorious with its people.

Peace be upon you. The enemy Oh beloved tries in vain to shake your steadfastness and your heroic confrontations. Therefore, they started bypassing the defenses of the armed forces around Baghdad just like other Iraqi cities in general, avoiding clashing with it, or by testing it and avoiding it when found strong and holding fast. Instead, they bypass it and airdrop here and there just as we have previously expected them. The landing and the movement is mostly on the roads, in small numbers of vehicles and evildoers, in a way that makes it possible for you to resist and destroy with the available weapons. Perhaps you remember the valiant Iraqi peasant and how he shot down an American Apache with an old weapon, Berno. Strike them forcefully. Strike them by the force of faith wherever they come close to you. Resist them, Oh people of valiant and beautiful Baghdad, whenever they come close to you and traverse on your venerable city, relying on God, The Powerful, The Great.

4th Infantry Division lands in Kuwait continued

Army Spec. Robert Muriel, 21, said now that the soliders are here they can finally do their jobs.

"Now it's going to get fun," said Muriel, an infantryman who rides in the back of a Bradley. "I joined for adventure. And now it's about to begin."

Stick to your principles, your patriotism, the honor of men and women, the faith and the honor of the pledge. You are now, our beloved, Oh people of Baghdad and Iraq, the mast of faith and glory. You will be victorious and they will be, God willing, defeated and cursed. God is great. Glory is to God and victory is Iraq's. God is great. Long live our nation. Long live Iraq. Long live Palestine. On to Jihad. Their dead will go to hell, and the living will be covered with shame. Our martyrs will go to heaven and our living will have glory and pride. Glory and the approval of God, The merciful The compassionate, will be yours, you Iraqi men and glorious women, of the people of Baghdad and Iraq. God is great, God is great, and fie on the criminals.

Poll: military gains boost U.S. optimism

(Associated Press) -- The American public's optimism about the war in Iraq has grown as the troops have been advancing on Baghdad in recent days, a new poll suggests.

Almost half, 47 percent, of those in an ABC-Washington Post poll released Friday said they think the war is going "very well." That's up from a third, 34 percent, who felt that way a week ago.

The number of people who expect significant casualties has dropped from 82 percent a week ago, to 69 percent. That's just above the six in 10 who expected significant casualties before the war started.

Seven in 10, 71 percent, said they approve of the president's overall job performance and about the same number, 73 percent, support the United States going to war with Iraq.

More than eight in 10 say the battle for control of Baghdad will be difficult, with three in 10 saying it will be very difficult.

The ABC-Post poll of 511 adults was conducted Thursday and has an error margin of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

North Korea proclaims right to export arms

by Sang-Hun Choe

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) - North Korea defended its missile exports on Friday, responding to U.S. sanctions against Pakistani and North Korean companies for their links to each other's missile programs.

Early this week, Washington imposed two-year penalties on North Korea's Changgwang Sinyong Corp. for selling missiles and Pakistan's Khan Research Laboratories for buying them.

The penalties forbid transactions with the U.S. government or American businesses. But the action was largely symbolic because neither company has business contacts with Washington or any firm in the United States.

"We are an independent sovereign state that is not bound by any law from exporting missiles and technology," North Korea's state KCNA news agency said.

The report, monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, said North Korea's missiles are of a "peaceful and defensive nature."

The news agency accused the Bush administration of using the sanctions to distract attention from anti-war protests around the world.

Bush had labeled North Korea part of an "axis of evil" along with

Iraq and Iran, and accused it of trying to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The sanctions were part of Washington's efforts to try to pressure North Korea into abandoning its suspected nuclear weapons programs.

On Friday, 15 lawmakers from South Korea's ruling and opposition parties urged the Seoul government to consider economic sanctions against the North because of the nuclear dispute.

In London, Maurice Strong, a special adviser to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, said Thursday "it's entirely possible" that the nuclear standoff between the United States and North Korea could escalate into war.

Strong, who visited North Korea last month, said that Pyongyang was "prepared to go to war if they believe the security and the integrity of their nation is really threatened, and they do."

The U.N. Security Council will meet to discuss the North Korean nuclear crisis next Wednesday. The council could eventually discuss imposing sanctions against North Korea, if a political solution is not found. China and Russia have said they oppose sanctions.

North Korea has warned that it would regard international sanctions against its isolated regime as a declaration of war.



Troops of the 3rd Infantry Division, based at Fort Benning, Ga., work their way into the center of Karbala, Iraq. (AP photo)



HOMELAND DEFENSE



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U.S., Kurds cooperate for bridge battle

by Brian Murphy

NEAR KHAZER, Iraq (AP) - The Kurds' yellow flag was wedged into the rusty bridge at Khazer, a key crossing point on the road to the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Militiamen allied with U.S. forces marched over single file, their rucksacks and guns swaying on their backs.

The two-day battle for the bridge that ended Friday put an unusual partnership on display: computer-coordinated U.S. air power and the rugged simplicity of the Kurdish guerrillas known as peshmerga, or "those who face death."

"The Iraqis are running," an Iraqi Kurd shouted as he crossed the bridge. "And we are chasing."

They passed the burning wreckage of an Iraqi military truck hit by coalition airstrikes. Two bodies lay on one side, their seared skin reflecting the sun like high-gloss plastic.

The Iraqis still clung to a position about a half mile west of the bridge and unleashed a heavy artillery barrage around Khazer early in the evening. The battle still raged at dusk, with U.S. B-52s bombing Iraqi positions.

Air attacks during the past week have forced Iraqi troops back from the border with the Western-protected Kurdish zone. In most places, Kurds simply moved into the abandoned territory to advance closer to the key prizes of Mosul and the oil center around Kirkuk.

But the thrust toward Khazer, 18 miles east of Mosul, reflected a more aggressive Kurdish strategy. With U.S.-led soldiers on Baghdad's doorstep in the south, it could indicate the start of a bolder push to Baghdad from the north.

At noon, the 17th Battalion of the Kurdistan Democratic Party - one of the two main Kurdish factions - was within sight of Khazer from a hilltop dotted with foxholes once held by the Iraqis. Lt. Col. Tasim Hajiabduallah sent scouts from his battalion of about 1,700 through a pasture filled with yellow wildflowers to scan the Iraqi fortifications.

The report came back: sandbag bunkers and Iraqi soldiers with AK-47s. Mortars were seen. No big artillery or tanks.

"Good. Very good," said Hajiabduallah, who wore a red beret and khaki uniform with sharp creases and an old Iraqi army belt. "We will move slowly."

This was never part of the Kurdish fighters' doctrine. Through decades of conflict with Baghdad, the peshmerga was known for its fearless but uncoordinated tactics, each group acting as a freelance strike force. But the Pentagon has demanded strict obedience to its war planning against Saddam Hussein.

The result has been unexpected restraint by the Kurds.



Kurdish soldiers look at coalition fighter planes bombing Iraqi troop positions on the outskirts of the northern Iraqi town of Kifry, 110 kilometers (68 miles) from Baghdad Wednesday April 2, 2003. (AP Photo/Newsha Tavakolian)

"The Americans decide every battle and how far we can go," said Shoukrin Nerwey, a top coordinator for Kurdish fighters.

The Kurds say they are fighting for a future semiautonomous state within an Iraqi federation, something they say they have been assured will include Kirkuk and Mosul.

U.S. soldiers moved through the Kurdish formations on Friday, apparently checking positions and directing airstrikes against the Iraqis. A B-52 bomber moved overhead in a lazy curve about 1:15 p.m. Moments later, a series of blasts hit Iraqi lines.

"They are pulling out," said Hajiabduallah. "We're moving."

Kurdish irregulars streamed forward. They moved rapidly, but under no apparent direct command. Some walked through fields; others took the road. Their packs bulged with extra clothes and colorful carpets used as bed rolls. A few carried grenade launchers on their shoulders. All had AK-47 rifles, some well-oiled and shiny, others showing their age.

Two Kurdish fighters prepared an anti-aircraft gun on the back of a truck bearing the lion's head emblem of their unit. They planned to use it against Iraqi troops if they staged a counter attack.

Then came more explosions near the bridge from another airstrike. Two American soldiers, wearing traditional red-checkered Kurdish scarves, drove through the field toward the town of Kalak, about six miles east.

Hidam Shamsadeen, a young Kurdish fighter, came running up the road carrying an 82 mm mortar launcher and tripod.

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Young people try to contribute during war

by Martha Irvine, Associated Press

Sarah Abedi, a teen from southern California, is helping raise money for Iraqi families.

Doug Mercurio, a law student in Rhode Island, is taking time to assemble care packages - filled with everything from toilet paper to sun block to Starbucks coffee - for his cousin's Army unit in the Persian Gulf region.

Young people across the country are taking action in response to the war in Iraq beyond protests or rallies. Helping, they say, makes them feel better than merely watching the conflict unfold.

"I cannot describe the feeling I experienced when I realized that the efforts of a small law school in Rhode Island are having a definite impact on the lives and morale of troops thousands of miles away," Mercurio, a third-year law student at Roger Williams University, said after receiving a thank-you letter from a soldier he's never met.

In the past month - and with funding from students and professors - he's sent about 250 pounds worth of goods to his cousin's unit.

For Abedi, motivation to help has come partly from stories about war and political upheaval told by her parents, who fled Iran during the revolution there in the 1970s. Now she worries that young people in Iraq are feeling scared and alone.

U.S., Kurds cooperate for bridge battle continued

"I got this from the Iraqis," he yelled excitedly. "They left it behind. We'll use it against them now."

A teenager, holding the bright yellow banner of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, passed among fighters resting in the shade of a small cliff. He ran up to the only officer present.

"How far can we go and put the flag?" he asked.

"Up to there," said the officer, pointing to a small hill less than a half mile from the bridge over the muddy and sluggish Mangouba River. "Don't go any farther. The Iraqis are firing back."

The retreating Iraqis opened up with automatic rifle fire that pinged off the bridge, forcing Kurds to run down the river bank for cover.

"Incoming!" a Kurdish fighter shouted. Those around him dove into Iraqi bunkers that had been abandoned shortly before. The whistle of Iraqi artillery passed over and the shell fell harmlessly on the ridge where the Kurdish offensive had begun earlier.

Moments later coalition warplanes blasted hills outside Khazer where the Iraqis had regrouped. The smoke was already rising by the time the thud reached the bridge.

"It's far away. The Iraqis are leaving," said Kamal Aziz, huddled with a dozen other fighters in a hillside dugout used to shelter Iraqi vehicles. "The bridge is ours."

"I feel that the children of Iraq are, in a sense, the children here - us," said Abedi, a 15-year-old from Santa Monica, Calif., who helped found a UNICEF chapter at her high school. Since the war started, she and her classmates have raised about \$300 with bake sales at track meets and other events.

Experts say such efforts are one of the best ways young people - or adults, for that matter - can soothe anxiousness or fatigue over the war that many are feeling.

"Whenever we help somebody, it makes us feel good. We feel better about ourselves; we feel we're part of the solution," said C.T. O'Donnell II, a psychologist who is president and CEO of KidsPeace,

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Engineers from The 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment dispose of unexploded bomblets found in the desert near their base in the southern Iraqi oilfields, Friday, April 4, 2003. The region is littered with unexploded ordnance including anti-tank and anti-personnel mines which are detonated in place for safety. (AP Photo/Chris Ison/ MOD/ Pool)

Daily routine sets in at base in Iraq

by Denis D. Gray

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq (AP) -The largest U.S. military base inside Iraq buzzes with activity: C-130 transport planes land around-the-clock and truck convoys are loaded with supplies.

But as this decrepit installation is transformed into a major postwar hub, daily routine is already setting in - with the thump of rap music and the first groans of boredom among the troops.

Sgt. Alan T. Jiminez wiggles out of his sleeping bag at 7 a.m. and hands out the daily ration of ready-to-eat meals. In the afternoon, he picks up more food and water for his unit, the 709th Military Police Battalion, cleans his M-16 rifle and usually gets off duty at 6 p.m.

Then Jiminez, of Aurora, Ill., reads the Bible, writes his wife and 7-month-old son ("So when he's older he'll know I thought about

him") and watches a DVD movie or two on his laptop.

"Life's a lot better than I thought it would be. You make do, improvise," says Cpl. Joshua Crimmins, one of eight soldiers running what is the first U.S. military post office in Iraq. All eight were yanked from civilian life and called up from the U.S Army Reserve or National Guard.

Truckloads of letters and packages, containing everything from homemade pickles to catalogue orders from Disney, are arriving across the desert from Kuwait or aboard medical evacuation helicopters for both Tallil and forward units.

The volume of outgoing letters, mailed free, is also increasing, says

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Young people try to contribute during war continued

a nonprofit organization that aids children in emotional crisis.

O'Donnell says more teens are voicing concerns about the war on one of the organization's Web sites. At the same time, a number of other young people who visit the site are stepping forward as peer counselors to offer advice - yet another way of reaching out, he says.

Other organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs, the Salvation Army and a Web site for teens called YouthNOISE.com, also are assisting young people who want to get involved, most often by helping them to get letters to troops, Iraqi families and world leaders.

Corporate America has stepped up its efforts, too.

America Online has created several war-related chat rooms and message boards for its members. Already, its "Military Pen Pals" message board has received more than 100,000 postings - many of them from young people, company officials say.

Telecom company SBC Communications, with help from Veterans of Foreign Wars, is providing school children with phone cards to send with the letters they're writing to American soldiers.

"Thank you with all my heart - and know that you are a hero in my book," Vincent Hutcherson, a 14-year-old student at Pacers Academy in Indianapolis, wrote in a letter that accompanied one of the phone cards.

Meanwhile, several students at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, - who have varying views about the war - are going without evening



Sarah Abedi, 15, whose family is originally from Iran, volunteers her time to raise money for UNICEF at her home Saturday, March 29, 2003, in Los Angeles. Abedi asked her fellow high school students to contribute their spare change to aid Iraqi children affected by the war. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

meals and gathering nightly for a candlelight vigil at the center of campus.

Itonde Kakoma, a religion major and organizer, says the students plan to donate money they would've spent on meals - as much as \$9,000 - to Lutheran World Relief to help feed Iraqi refugee families.

"Our focus is not necessarily on the charity. It is on solidarity," said Kakoma who began fasting from sunset to sunrise on March 21. "At sunset, I realize that I am connected to the greater world."

Daily routine sets in at base in Iraq continued

Crimmins, of Richmond, Va., and the post office, housed in a tent, will soon be able to send out packages as long as they don't contain war souvenirs, pork, which is offensive to Muslims, or Iraqi sand, a possible health hazard.

Life behind the lines offers other rewards.

Field kitchens serving hot food are expected in coming days, sleeping tents with floors are also being shipped and proper latrines are replacing slit trenches. A laundry service tent will be operating soon.

Not long from now, Tallil will also have a Post Exchange, barber shop, gymnasium and other standard amenities of American military life. "We might even get a Burger King trailer," said Brig. Gen. Jack Stultz, the base commander.

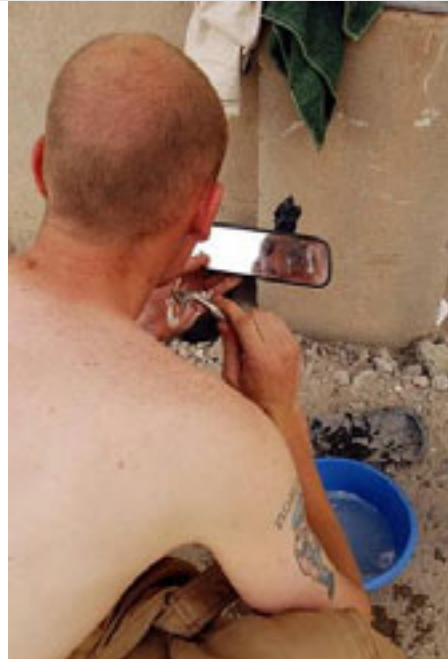
Greeted with perhaps the most enthusiasm were showers, although there are now just 12 shower heads for some 6,000 base personnel.

"They can only take seven minutes inside the shower tent and then I kick them out," said Sgt. Jenny Canlas of Virginia Beach, Va., of the long lines Friday.

Stultz, a U.S. Army Reserve officer from Orlando, Fla., said that after the war, Tallil will also serve as a base for humanitarian relief flowing into Iraq by air and overland from Kuwait. The airfield is the second-largest in the country, after Baghdad's international airport.

Military civil affairs teams are already poised to fan out into local communities and the base has begun distributing water to surrounding villages.

For many troops, Tallil, about a third of the way between the Kuwaiti border and Baghdad, is the end of the line in the war. And it's a foretaste of the kind of daily life thousands of U.S. soldiers will face



A British soldier from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, also known as the "Desert Rats," gives himself a shave in the southern Iraq town of Basra Friday, April 4, 2003. (AP Photo/Tony Nicoletti, Pool)

Many support units expect to remain behind after the combat soldiers have returned home.

So off-duty soldiers, swatting flies and seeking shelter from the scorching sun, talk of the number of days before their enlistment ends, cold beer, spending the tax-free pay they saved and why they still have to wear sweltering chemical suits and body armor when Tallil is safer than some mean streets in New York.

Music is a great escape, and portable CD players almost seem like standard Army issue. Wafting out of tents and Humvees are songs by groups like Godsmack, Papa Roach and the Dixie Chicks, whose "Travellin' Soldier" ranks high among favorites.



Captured Iraqi Republican Guard Soldiers are led away from the battlefield. An unspecified number of Iraqi soldiers were captured and an arms cache, hidden in a school, was destroyed. (Baltimore Sun photo by John Makely)

First U.S. journalist killed in Iraq war

Kelly was a columnist for The Washington Post and editor-at-large for The Atlantic Monthly

by Jonathan D. Salant, Associated Press



WASHINGTON — Michael Kelly, editor-at-large for The Atlantic Monthly and columnist, was killed while on assignment covering the war in Iraq. He is the first American journalist to die in the conflict.

Kelly, also a hard-hitting conservative columnist for The Washington Post and a former editor of The New Republic, died Thursday night while traveling with the U.S. Army's

3rd Infantry Division as it moved across Iraq, according to a statement issued by Atlantic Media.

The 46-year-old, who had also covered the first Persian Gulf war, was the first journalist to die among the 600 embedded with the U.S. armed forces. Three foreign journalists have been killed covering the war, two from the United Kingdom and one from Australia.

Neither the Defense Department nor Atlantic Media provided details about Kelly's death. However, The Washington Post, on its Web site, said Kelly was killed in a Humvee accident.

In his final column for The Post published Thursday, Kelly wrote about accompanying an Army task force as it captured a bridge across the Euphrates River.

"On the western side of the bridge, Lt. Col. Ernest "Rock" Marcone, commander of Task Force 3-69, stood in the sand by the side of the road, smoking a cigar and drinking a cup of coffee," Kelly wrote. "Marcone's soldiers say he deeply likes to win, and he seemed quietly happy.... We now hold the critical ground through which the rest of the division can pass and engage and destroy the Republican Guard," Marcone said."

Kelly was fired as editor of The New Republic, a weekly political journal, in 1997 by owner Martin Peretz, a friend and former teacher of then-Vice President Al Gore. Peretz objected to what he felt was the magazine's constant criticism of the Clinton administration, especially in Kelly's regular column.

Kelly became a columnist for the Post and continued to criticize Clinton. Around the same time, he was hired as the editor of National Journal, a weekly magazine that covers the federal government. When the Journal's owner, David Bradley, bought The Atlantic Monthly in 1999, he named Kelly editor of the venerable magazine.

Last September, Kelly stepped down from that post and took the title editor-at-large. He is also chief editorial adviser to the Journal.

Before taking the helm of The New Republic, Kelly was a reporter for The New York Times and a writer and editor at The New Yorker. Kelly began his career as a reporter at the Cincinnati Post and The Sun, where he worked from 1986 to 1989.

He covered the first Persian Gulf War as a stringer for The Boston Globe, GQ and The New Republic, as well as the Iraq-Kurdish conflict that followed it. He won a National Magazine Award and an Overseas Press Club award for his articles, and later wrote a book based on his reporting, "Martyr's Day: Chronicle of a Small War."

A native of Washington, D.C., Kelly was the son of two journalists — Thomas Kelly, a former reporter, and Marguerite Kelly, who writes the syndicated column, "Family Almanac." Kelly is survived by his wife, Madelyn, and two sons, Tom, 6, and Jack, 3.



The U.S. Coast Guard cutter "Ibis" patrols the Potomac River near the National Mall in Washington Thursday, April 3, 2003. Homeland security concerns and the war in Iraq has heightened security along the two rivers that frame the nation's capital. The 87 foot "Ibis" and two 25 foot patrol boats are running the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers 24 hours a day. (AP Photos/Evan Vucci)

Powell: Post-war Iraq to transfer quickly to Iraqi control

by Kathleen T. Rhem, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 3, 2003 – Immediately after the Iraqi regime falls, U.S. and coalition military officials will assume responsibility for stabilizing the country, but soon after will transition to an “interim Iraqi authority,” Secretary of State Colin Powell said today.

In the immediate “post-hostilities phase,” military commanders will be responsible for stabilizing the country and providing security, finding and destroying weapons of mass destruction, and assessing infrastructure, Powell said. He addressed reporters after a meeting of NATO ministers and European Union officials assembled at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

That military leader will perform that job as the commander of the liberating force. But “we will quickly want to bring in individuals who can establish an interim Iraqi authority so that the people of Iraq can very quickly see that their own representatives are moving into positions of authority,” Powell said.

The secretary added that international organizations, such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, would have active roles in post-war Iraq.

Powell noted that the United States and a few European nations had serious disagreements over using force in Iraq, “heated disagreements where we came to opposite conclusions on a very important issue of the day.” He didn’t mention specific countries, but the most vehement opposition to military action came from France and Germany.

Still, now that war has begun, he said, “we now must move forward and align ourselves again with the need to serve the Iraqi people.

“The people of Iraq deserve a government that is responsive to its needs, that reflects all of the dreams and hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people,” he continued. And it’s U.S., coalition and international community collective obligation to ensure “that hope is not deferred or defeated.”



Secretary of State Colin Powell shakes hands with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, left, at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Thursday April 3, 2003. Powell is holding various ministerial talks covering the reconstruction of post-war Iraq. (AP Photo/NATO/HO)

Powell rejected a reporter’s suggestion that U.S. diplomacy is failing. “U.S. diplomacy is alive and well,” he countered before launching into a lengthy overview of diplomatic efforts U.S. officials made before starting military operations in Iraq.

“We used skillful diplomacy to get to the point of (U.N. Security Council Resolution) 1441, but diplomacy must be backed by force,” Powell said. “Diplomacy is useless if one is not willing to use force to impose the will of the international community on a nation such as Iraq, which violated the will of the international community for 12 years.”

The resolution, passed unanimously in November 2002, authorized “severe consequences” if Iraq failed to willingly disarm.



Members of 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion look out over the Ur Temple site April 1, 2003 at a forward deployed location in southern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The temple site is 6,000 years old and is the birthplace of Abram who is referenced in the Bible. The 402nd CA Battalion works as a liaison between the military, relief agencies and dislocated civilians. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo



An Iraqi family leaves Baghdad, April 4, 2003. Terrified people fled into Baghdad on Friday after U.S. forces seized the nearby international airport, their biggest prize yet in a war to oust a defiant President Saddam Hussein. Reuters photo.



An engineer from the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment places an explosive charge on a bomblet found in the desert near the Battalion's base in the southern Iraqi oilfields, Friday, April 4, 2003. The region is littered with unexploded ordnance including anti-tank and anti-personnel mines which are detonated in place for safety. (AP Photo/Chris Ison/ MOD/Pool)



Iraqi men crush together as try to grab food packages handed out by British troops in the southern Iraqi town of Safwan March 31, 2003. Badly needed food, water and other humanitarian aid has begun flowing into southern Iraq through the secure port of Umm Qasar where a U.N. and World Food Program team arrived on April 4, the U.S. military said. Reuters photo.



Sgt. Johnny Monroe from Abbeville, S.C., his helmet marked with his blood type and battle tracking number, watches as an Iraqi armored personnel carrier burns at an Iraqi military compound south of Baghdad Friday, April 4, 2003. Troops from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment searched the compound, destroying abandoned Iraqi military vehicles and helicopter parts. (AP Photo/John Moore)